

but one, and presumably it was between the Cherubim, suspended at a certain height in the air. Prof. Lenormant, in speaking of this terrible weapon, states, that "the circumference, which was turned fully upon the spectator, could have been full of eyes all around, and that when the prophet says 'that they had a circumference and a height that were dreadful,' the second dimension refers to the breadth of their rims," and when advancing with the Cherubim against the irreverent intruder at the forbidden gate, it would strike and cut him in pieces as soon as it should graze him. The symbolism of this instrument has been fixed by Obry as the tchakra of India, which is a disk with sharp edges, hollow at the center, which is flung horizontally, after having been whirled around the fingers. "A weapon for slinging, shaped like a disk, moving horizontally with a gyratory motion, like that of a waterspout, having a hollow centre, that the tips of the fingers can pass through, whence seven divergent rays issue toward a circumference, about which are studded fifty sharp points." (See *Cherubim*.)

Sword, Templar's. According to the regulations of the Grand Encampment of the United States, the sword to be worn by the Knights Templar must have a helmet head or pommel, a cross handle, and a metal scabbard. The length from the top of the hilt to the end of the scabbard must be from thirty-four to forty inches.



Sword, Tiler's. In modern times the implement used by the Tiler is a sword of the ordinary form. This is incorrect. Formerly, and indeed up to a comparatively recent period, the Tiler's sword was wavy in shape, and so made in allusion to the "flaming sword which was placed at the east of the garden of Eden, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." It was, of course, without a scabbard, because the Tiler's sword should ever be drawn and ready for the defense of his post.

Sworn Brothers. (*Fratres jurati*.) It was the custom in the Middle Ages for soldiers, and especially knights, when going into battle, to engage each other by reciprocal oaths to share the rewards of victory and to defend each other in the fight. Thus Kennet tells us (*Paroch. Antiq.*) that in the commencement of the expedition of William of Normandy into England, Robert de Oiley and Roger de Iverio, "*fratres jurati, et per fidem et sacramentum confederati, venerunt ad conquestum Angliæ*," i. e., *they came to the conquest of England, as sworn brothers, bound by their faith and an oath.* Consequently, when William allotted them an estate as the reward of their military service, they divided it into equal portions, each taking one.

Syllable. To pronounce the syllables, or only one of the syllables, of a Sacred

Word, such as a name of God, was among the Orientalists considered far more reverent than to give to it in all its syllables a full and continuous utterance. Thus the Hebrews reduced the holy name JEHOVAH to the syllable JAH; and the Brahmans, taking the initial letters of the three words which expressed the three attributes of the Supreme Brahma, as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer, made of it the syllable AUM, which, on account of its awful and sacred meaning, they hesitated to pronounce aloud. To divide a word into syllables, and thus to interrupt the sound, either by pausing or by the alternate pronunciation by two persons, was deemed a mark of reverence.

Symbol. A symbol is defined to be a visible sign with which a spiritual feeling, emotion, or idea is connected. It was in this sense that the early Christians gave the name of symbols to all rites, ceremonies, and outward forms which bore a religious meaning; such, for instance, as the cross, and other pictures and images, and even the sacraments and the sacramental elements. At a still earlier period, the Egyptians communicated the knowledge of their esoteric philosophy in mystic symbols. In fact, man's earliest instruction was by means of symbols. "The first learning of the world," says Stukely, "consisted chiefly of symbols. The wisdom of the Chaldeans, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Jews, of Zoroaster, Sanchoniathon, Pherecydes, Syrus, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, of all the ancients that is come to our hand, is symbolic." And the learned Faber remarks that "allegory and personification were peculiarly agreeable to the genius of antiquity, and the simplicity of truth was continually sacrificed at the shrine of poetical decoration."

The word "symbol" is derived from a Greek verb which signifies "to compare one thing with another"; and hence a symbol or emblem, for the two words are often used synonymously in Masonry, is the expression of an idea which is derived from the comparison or contrast of some object with a moral conception or attribute. Thus the plumb is a symbol of rectitude; the level, of equality; the beehive, of industry. The physical qualities of the plumb are compared or contrasted with the moral conception of virtue or rectitude of conduct. The plumb becomes to the Mason, after he has once been taught its symbolic meaning, forever afterward the visible expression of the idea of rectitude, or uprightness of conduct. To study and compare these visible objects—to elicit from them the moral ideas which they are intended to express—is to make oneself acquainted with the Symbolism of Masonry.

The objective character of a symbol, which presents something material to the sight and touch, as explanatory of an internal idea, is best calculated to be grasped by the infant mind, whether the infancy of

that ~~must~~ be considered *nationally or individually*. And hence, in the first ages of the world, in its infancy, all propositions, theological, political, or scientific, were expressed in the form of symbols. Thus the first religions were eminently symbolical, because, as that great philosophical historian, Grote, has remarked, "At a time when language was yet in its infancy, visible symbols were the most vivid means of acting upon the minds of ignorant hearers."

To the man of mature intellect, each letter of the alphabet is the symbol of a certain sound. When we instruct the child in the form and value of these letters, we make the picture of some familiar object the representation of the letter which aids the infantile memory. Thus, when the teacher says, "A was an Archer," the Archer becomes a symbol of the letter A, just as in after-life the letter becomes the symbol of a sound.

"Symbolical representations of things sacred," says Dr. Barlow (*Essays on Symbolism*, i., p. 1), "were coeval with religion itself as a system of doctrine appealing to sense, and have accompanied its transmission to ourselves from the earliest known period of monumental history."

"Egyptian tombs and styles exhibit religious symbols still in use among Christians. Similar forms, with corresponding meanings, though under different names, are found among the Indians, and are seen on the monuments of the Assyrians, the Etruscans, and the Greeks."

"The Hebrews borrowed much of their early religious symbolism from the Egyptians, their later from the Babylonians, and through them this symbolical imagery, both verbal and objective, has descended to ourselves."

"The Egyptian priests were great proficient in symbolism, and so were the Chaldeans, and so were Moses and the Prophets, and the Jewish doctors generally—and so were many of the early fathers of the Church, especially the Greek fathers."

"Philo of Alexandria was very learned in symbolism, and the Evangelist St. John has made much use of it."

"The early Christian architects, sculptors, and painters drank deep of symbolical lore, and reproduced it in their works."

Squier gives in his *Serpent Symbolism in America* (p. 19) a similar view of the antiquity and the subsequent growth of the use of symbols. He says: "In the absence of a written language or forms of expression capable of conveying abstract ideas, we can readily comprehend the necessity, among a primitive people, of a symbolic system. That symbolism in a great degree resulted from this necessity is very obvious; and that, associated with man's primitive religious systems, it was afterwards continued, when in the advanced stage of the human mind the previous necessity no longer existed, is equally undoubted. It

thus came to constitute a kind of sacred language, and became invested with an esoteric significance understood only by the few."

In Freemasonry, all the instructions in its mysteries are communicated in the form of symbols. Founded, as a speculative science, on an operative art, it has taken the working-tools of the profession which it spiritualizes, the terms of architecture, the Temple of Solomon, and everything that is connected with its traditional history, and adopting them as symbols, it teaches its great moral and philosophical lessons by this system of symbolism. But its symbols are not confined to material objects as were the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians. Its myths and legends are also, for the most part, symbolic. Often a legend, unauthenticated by history, distorted by anachronisms, and possibly absurd in its pretensions if viewed historically or as a narrative of actual occurrences, when interpreted as a symbol, is found to impress the mind with some great spiritual and philosophical truth. The legends of Masonry are parables, and a parable is only a spoken symbol. By its utterance, says Adam Clarke, "spiritual things are better understood, and make a deeper impression on the attentive mind."

Symbol, Compound. In Dr. Mackey's work on the *Symbolism of Freemasonry*, he has given this name to a species of symbol that is not unusual in Freemasonry, where the symbol is to be taken in a double sense, meaning in its general application one thing, and then in a special application another. An example of this is seen in the symbolism of Solomon's Temple, where, in a general sense, the Temple is viewed as a symbol of that spiritual temple formed by the aggregation of the whole Order, and in which each Mason is considered as a stone; and, in an individual or special sense, the same Temple is considered as a type of that spiritual temple which each Mason is directed to erect in his heart.

Symbolic Degrees. The first three degrees of Freemasonry, namely, those of Entered Apprentice, Fellow-Craft, and Master Mason, are known, by way of distinction, as the "symbolic degrees." This term is never applied to the degrees of Mark, Past, and Most Excellent Master, and the Royal Arch, which, as being conferred in a body called a Chapter, are generally designated as "capitular degrees"; nor to those of Royal and Select Master, which, conferred in a Council, are, by an excellent modern usage, styled "cryptic degrees," from the crypt or vault which plays so important a part in their ritual. But the term "symbolic" is exclusively confined to the degrees conferred in a Lodge of the three primitive degrees, which Lodge, therefore, whether opened on the First, the Second or the Third Degree, is always referred to as a "symbolic Lodge." As this distinctive term is of constant and universal use, it may be considered not al-

together useless to inquire into its origin and signification.

The germ and nucleus of all Freemasonry is to be found in the three primitive degrees—the Apprentice, the Fellow-Craft, and the Master Mason. They were at one time (under a modification, however, which included the Royal Arch) the only degrees known to or practised by the Craft, and hence they are often called "Ancient Craft Masonry," to distinguish them from those comparatively modern additions which constitute what are designated as the "high degrees," or, by the French, "*les hautes grades*." The striking peculiarity of these primitive degrees is that their prominent mode of instruction is by symbols. Not that they are without legends. On the contrary, they have each an abundance of legends; such, for instance, as the details of the building of the Temple; of the payment of wages in the middle chamber, or of the construction of the pillars of the porch. But these legends do not perform any very important part in the constitution of the degree. The lessons which are communicated to the candidate in these primitive degrees are conveyed, principally, through the medium of symbols, while there is (at least in the working of the degrees) but little tradition or legendary teaching, with the exception of the great legend of Masonry, the "GOLDEN LEGEND" of the Order, to be found in the Master's Degree, and which is, itself, a symbol of the most abstruse and solemn signification. But even in this instance, interesting as are the details of the legend, they are only subordinate to the symbol. Hiram the Builder is the profound symbol of manhood laboring for immortality, and all the different points of the legend are simply clustered around it, only to throw out the symbol in bolder relief. The legend is of itself inert—it is the symbol of the Master Workman that gives it life and true meaning.

Symbolism is, therefore, the prevailing characteristic of these primitive degrees; and it is because all the science and philosophy and religion of Ancient Craft Masonry is thus concealed from the profane but unfolded to the initiates in symbols, that the first three degrees which comprise it are said to be symbolic.

Now, nothing of this kind is to be found in the degrees above and beyond the third, if we except the Royal Arch, which, however, as I have already intimated, was originally a part of Ancient Craft Masonry, and was unnaturally torn from the Master's Degree, of which it, as every Masonic student knows, constituted the complement and consummation. Take, for example, the intermediate degrees of the American Chapter, such, for instance, as the Mark and Most Excellent Master. Here we find the symbolic feature ceasing to predominate, and the traditional or legendary taking its place. It is true that in these capitular degrees the use of symbols is not altogether abandoned. This could not well be, for the symbol constitutes the very

essence of Freemasonry. The symbolic element is still to be discovered in these degrees, but only in a position subordinate to legendary instruction. As an illustration, let us consider the keystone in the Mark Master's Degree. Now, no one will deny that this is, strictly speaking, a symbol, and a very important and beautiful one, too. It is a symbol of a fraternal covenant between those who are engaged in the common search after Divine truth. But, in the rôle which it plays in the ritual of this degree, the symbol, however beautiful and appropriate it may be, is in a manner lost sight of, and the keystone derives almost all its importance and interest from the traditional history of its construction, its architectural design, and its fate. It is as the subject of a legend, and not as a symbol, that it attracts attention. Now, in the Third or Master's Degree we find the trowel, which is a symbol of almost precisely the same import as the keystone. They both refer to a Masonic covenant. But no legend, no tradition, no history, is connected with the trowel. It presents itself simply and exclusively as a symbol. Hence we learn that symbols do not in the capitular, as in the primitive, degrees of Masonry strike the eye, and inform the mind, and teach the heart, in every part of the Lodge, and in every part of the ceremonial initiation. On the contrary, the capitular degrees are almost altogether founded on and composed of a series of events in Masonic history. Each of them has attached to it some tradition or legend which it is the design of the degree to illustrate, and the memory of which is preserved in its ceremonies and instructions. That most of these legends are themselves of symbolic signification is not denied. But this is their interior sense. In their outward and ostensible meaning, they appear before us simply as legends. To retain these legends in the memory of Masons appears to have been the primary design of the establishment of the higher degrees, and as the information intended to be communicated in these degrees is of an historical character, there can of course be but little room for symbols or for symbolic instruction, the profuse use of which would rather tend to an injury than to a benefit, by complicating the purposes of the ritual and confusing the mind of the aspirant.

The celebrated French writer, Ragon, objects to this exclusive application of the term "symbolic" to the first three degrees as a sort of unfavorable criticism on the higher degrees, and as if implying that the latter are entirely devoid of the element of symbolism. But he has mistaken the true import and meaning of the application. It is not because the higher or capitular and cryptic degrees are altogether without symbols—for such is not the case—that the term symbolic is withheld from them, but because symbolic instruction does not constitute their predominating characteristic, as it does of the first three degrees.

And hence the Masonry taught in these

three primitive degrees is very properly called *Symbolic Masonry*, and the Lodge in which this Masonry is taught is known as a *Symbolic Lodge*.

Symbolic Lectures. The lectures appropriated to the First, Second, and Third degrees are sometimes called Symbolic lectures; but the term is more properly applied to any lecture which treats of the meaning of Masonic symbols, in contradistinction to one which discusses only the history of the Order, and which would, therefore, be called an Historical Lecture. But the English Masons have a lecture called "the symbolical lecture," in which is explained the forms, symbols, and ornaments of Royal Arch Masonry, as well as its rites and ceremonies.*

Symbolic Lodge. A Lodge of Master Masons, with the Fellow-Craft and Apprentice Lodge worked under its Constitution, is called a Symbolic Lodge, because in it the Symbolic degrees are conferred. (See *Symbolic Degrees*.)

Symbolic Machinery. Machinery is a term employed in epic and dramatic poetry to denote some agency introduced by the poet to serve some purpose or accomplish some event. Faber, in treating of the Apocalypse, speaks of "a patriarchal scheme of symbolical machinery derived most plainly from the events of the deluge, and borrowed, with the usual perverse misapplication, by the contrivers of paganism, but which has since been reclaimed by Christianity to its proper use." Dr. Oliver thinks that this "scheme of symbolical machinery" was "the primitive Freemasonry, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." Without adopting this questionable hypothesis, it must be admitted that Freemasonry, in the scenic representations sometimes used in its initiations, has, like the epic poets, and dramatists, and the old hierophants, availed itself of the use of symbolic machinery.

Symbolic Masonry. The Masonry that is concerned with the first three degrees in all the Rites. This is the technical meaning. But in a more general sense, Symbolic Masonry is that Masonry, wherever it may be found, whether in the primary or in the high degrees, in which the lessons are communicated by symbols. (See *Symbolic Degrees*.)

Symbolism, The Science of. The science which is engaged in the investigation of the meaning of symbols, and the application of their interpretation to moral, religious, and philosophical instruction. In this sense, Freemasonry is essentially a science of symbolism. The English lectures define Freemasonry to be "a peculiar system of morality

veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." The definition would be more correct were it in these words: *Freemasonry is a system of morality developed and inculcated by the science of symbolism*. It is this peculiar character as a symbolic institution, this entire adoption of the method of instruction by symbolism, which gives its whole identity to Freemasonry and has caused it to differ from every other association that the ingenuity of man has devised. It is this that has bestowed upon it that attractive form which has always secured the attachment of its disciples and its own perpetuity.

The Roman Catholic Church is, perhaps, the only contemporaneous institution which continues to cultivate, in any degree, the beautiful system of symbolism. But that which, in the Catholic Church, is, in a great measure, incidental, and the fruit of development, is, in Freemasonry, the very life-blood and soul of the Institution, born with it at its birth, or, rather, the germ from which the tree has sprung, and still giving it support, nourishment, and even existence. Withdraw from Freemasonry its Symbolism, and you take from the body its soul, leaving behind nothing but a lifeless mass of effete matter, fitted only for a rapid decay.

Since, then, the science of symbolism forms so important a part of the system of Freemasonry, it will be well to commence any discussion of that subject by an investigation of the nature of symbols in general.

There is no science so ancient as that of symbolism, and no mode of instruction has ever been so general as was the symbolic in former ages. "The first learning in the world," says the great antiquary, Dr. Stukely, "consisted chiefly of symbols." The wisdom of the Chaldeans, Phœnicians, Egyptians, Jews, of Zoroaster, Sanchoniathon, Pherecydes, Syrus, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, of all the ancients that is come to our hand, is symbolic." And the learned Faber remarks, that "allegory and personification were peculiarly agreeable to the genius of antiquity, and the simplicity of truth was continually sacrificed at the shrine of poetical decoration."

In fact, man's earliest instruction was by symbols. The objective character of a symbol is best calculated to be grasped by the infant mind, whether the infancy of that mind be considered *nationally* or *individually*. And hence, in the first ages of the world in its infancy, all propositions, theological, political, or scientific, were expressed in the form of symbols. Thus the first religions were eminently symbolical, because, as that great philosophical historian, Grote, has remarked, "At a time when language was yet in its infancy, visible symbols were the most vivid means of acting upon the minds of ignorant hearers."

Even in the very formation of language, the medium of communication between man and man, and which must hence have been an elementary step in the progress of human improvement, it was found necessary to have

*It is unfortunate that the Historical Lecture usually given in the Master's Degree is often absurd from any known historical or Masonic basis. This is misleading to those who have every reason to expect a different treatment at our hands, and efforts should be made to correct this error.

[E. E. C.]

recourse to symbols, for words are only and truly certain arbitrary symbols by which and through which we give an utterance to our ideas. The construction of language was, therefore, one of the first products of the science of symbolism.

We must constantly bear in mind this fact of the primary existence and predominance of symbolism in the earliest times, when we are investigating the nature of the ancient religions, with which the history of Freemasonry is so intimately connected. The older the religion, the more the symbolism abounds. Modern religions may convey their dogmas in abstract propositions; ancient religions always conveyed them in symbols. Thus there is more symbolism in the Egyptian religion than in the Jewish, more in the Jewish than in the Christian, more in the Christian than in the Mohammedan, and, lastly, more in the Roman than in the Protestant.

But symbolism is not only the most ancient and general, but it is also the most practically useful, of sciences. We have already seen how actively it operates in the early stages of life and of society. We have seen how the first ideas of men and of nations are impressed upon their minds by means of symbols. It was thus that the ancient peoples were almost wholly educated.

"In the simpler stages of society," says one writer on this subject, "mankind can be instructed in the abstract knowledge of truths only by symbols and parables. Hence we find most heathen religions becoming mythic, or explaining their mysteries by allegories, or instructive incidents. Nay, God himself, knowing the nature of the creatures formed by him, has condescended, in the earlier revelations that he made of himself, to teach by symbols; and the greatest of all teachers instructed the multitudes by parables. The great exemplar of the ancient philosophy and the grand archetype of modern philosophy were alike distinguished by their possessing this faculty in a high degree, and have told us that man was best instructed by similitudes."

Such is the system adopted in Freemasonry for the development and inculcation of the great religious and philosophical truths, of which it was, for so many years, the sole conservator. And it is for this reason that I have already remarked, that any inquiry into the symbolic character of Freemasonry, must be preceded by an investigation of the nature of symbolism in general, if we would properly appreciate its particular use in the organization of the Masonic Institution.

Symbol of Glory. In the old lectures of the last century, the Blazing Star was called "the glory in the centre"; because it was placed in the centre of the floor-cloth or tracing-board, and represented hieroglyphically the glorious name of God. Hence Dr. Oliver has given to one of his most interesting works, which treats of the symbolism of the Blazing Star, the title of *The Symbol of Glory*.

Syndication of Lodges. A term used in France, in 1773, by the Schismatic Grand Ori-

ent during its contests with the Grand Lodge, to denote the fusion of several Lodges into one. The word was never introduced into English Masonry, and has become obsolete in France.

Synod of Scotland. In 1757, the Associate Synod of Seceders of Scotland adopted an act, concerning what they called "the Mason oath," in which it is declared, that all persons who shall refuse to make such revelations as the Kirk Sessions may require, and to promise to abstain from all future connection with the Order, "shall be reputed under scandal, and incapable of admission to sealing ordinances." In consequence of this act, passed more than a century ago, the sect of Seceders, of which there are a few in America, continue to be at the present day inveterate enemies of the Masonic Institution.

Syria. A country of Asia Minor lying on the western shores of the Mediterranean. To the Freemason, it is associated with the legendary history of his Order in several interesting points, especially in reference to Mount Lebanon, from whose forests was derived the timber for the construction of the Temple. The modern Templar will view it as the scene of the contests waged during the Crusades by the Christian knights with their Saracen adversaries. In modern Syria, Freemasonry has been slow to find a home. The only Lodges existing in the country are at the city of Beyrout, which contains two—Palestine Lodge, No. 415, which was instituted by the Grand Lodge of Scotland, May 6, 1861, and the Lodge Le Liban, by the Grand Orient of France, January 4, 1869. Morris says (*Freemasonry in the Holy Land*, p. 216) that "the Order of Freemasonry is not in a condition satisfactory to the members thereof, nor creditable to the great cause in which the Fraternity are engaged."

Syrian Rite. A religious sect which had its origin in Syria, and which was anciently comprehended in the patriarchates of Antioch and of Jerusalem. It was an exceedingly flourishing system. Before the end of the fourth century it numbered 119 distinct sees, with a population of several millions. The liturgy is known as the Liturgy of St. James.

System. Lenning defines a system of Freemasonry to be the doctrine of Freemasonry as exhibited in the Lodge government and Lodge work or ritual. The definition is not, perhaps, satisfactory. In Freemasonry, a system is a plan or scheme of doctrines intended to develop a particular view as to the origin, the design, and the character of the Institution. The word is often used as synonymous with Rite, but the two words do not always express the same meaning. A system is not always developed into a Rite, or the same system may give birth to two or more different Rites. Dr. Oliver established a system founded on the literal acceptance of almost all the legendary traditions, but he never invented a Rite. Ramsay and Hund both held the same system as to the Templar origin of Masonry; but the Rite of Ramsay